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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Report of the Secretary-General

GE. 92-10492

Introduction

1. It will be recalled that at its forty-seventh session, in resolution 1991/30, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its forty-eighth session on progress in the preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights. The following report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. The Preparatory Committee for the World Conference met at Geneva from 9 to 13 September 1991. The report of the Preparatory Committee (A/CONF.157/PC/6) was noted with appreciation by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/116 of 17 December 1991, in which it adopted a number of decisions relating to the agenda, the rules of procedure and the venue, Berlin, of the World Conference. The General Assembly also established the budget of the World Conference.

A: Public information activities

3. Pursuant to paragraph 4.I(d) of General Assembly resolution 46/116, active measures are being taken to give the World Conference and the preparatory process thereof the widest possible publicity and to ensure full coordination of public information activities in the area of human rights. In this regard, the Secretary General will submit to the Preparatory Committee, at its second session, a consolidated report which will reflect the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information and the Centre for Human Rights in connection with the World Conference and its preparatory process.

B. Schedule of meetings of the Preparatory Committee

4. Pursuant to operative paragraph 4.II of resolution 46/116, the anticipated schedule of meetings of the Preparatory Committee, as authorized by the General Assembly, is forecast as follows:

(a) The second session of the Preparatory Committee will be held from 30 March to 10 April 1992.

(b) The third session will be held from 14 to 19 September 1992 and, if it is agreed to be necessary, the meeting would continue until 25 September 1992.

(c) The fourth session of the Preparatory Committee is tentatively planned to take place from 22 March to 2 April 1993.

All meetings of the Preparatory Committee will take place at Geneva.

C. Voluntary fund for least developed countries

5. With regard to the costs of participation of representatives of the least developed countries in the preparatory meetings,

including regional meetings, and in the World Conference itself, the Commission is referred to the Report of the Secretary-General on a voluntary fund for the participation of representatives of least developed countries (E/CN.4/1992/57/Add.1).

D. Regional preparatory meetings for the World Conference on Human Rights

6. In paragraph 4 IV of its resolution 46/116, the General Assembly decided that in accordance with the objectives and provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/155, regional meetings be convened for each region that so desired within the institutional framework or with the assistance of the regional commissions and that those meetings be financed as part of the preparatory work for the World Conference, as recommended for consideration by the Commission on Human Rights in paragraph 8 of the annex to its resolution 1991/30.

7. The Secretary-General of the Conference has been notified of the desire of various regional groups to hold regional preparatory meetings for the World Conference on Human Rights as follows:

i. Regional meeting in Latin America
San José, Costa Rica, 6 to 10 July 1992

ii. Regional meeting in Asia
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok, 17 to 21 August 1992

iii. Regional meeting in Africa
Tunis, Tunisia, 2 to 6 November 1992

8. The regional meetings are expected to focus on the means for enhancing implementation of human rights norms at the international, regional and national levels and to do so bearing in mind human rights aspects considered to be of particular concern to the region.

9. The provisional agenda for the regional preparatory meetings would include issues relating to the protection and promotion of human rights, including the implementation of international and regional human rights instruments. In addition, each regional meeting would consider issues of particular importance to the region which relate to the objectives of the World Conference, from the perspective of the particular region. The final report of each regional preparatory meeting would be considered by the World Conference itself.

E. Status of studies and documentation

10. In paragraph 4.V(a) of resolution 46/116, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a limited number of short, analytical and action-oriented studies on issues referred to in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 45/155, Commission on Human Rights resolution 1991/30 and in the annex

thereto, and also bearing in mind documentation prepared for and statements made at the first session of the Preparatory Committee. At its second session, the Preparatory Committee will have before it a list of these studies, together with indicative annotations on the possible contents of the studies.

11. Pursuant to paragraph 4.V(a) of General Assembly resolution 46/116, research and analysis has been initiated to prepare an inventory of United Nations studies and reports on human rights or related aspects, with a view to the preparation of a reference guide to such studies and reports. Based on the progress to date, the Secretary-General expects to complete the project by the autumn of 1992.

12. The Commission may wish to note that a human rights bibliography is under preparation by the United Nations Library at Geneva and the Centre for Human Rights. The publication of the Bibliography is expected to assist in the development of the reference guide as well as being an important research tool for all.

13. A report is under preparation for the second session of the Preparatory Committee on meetings that have been organized under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Programme, as requested in paragraph 4.V(b) of General Assembly resolution 46/116.

14. In response to the decision of the General Assembly in paragraph 4.V(d) of resolution 46/116 that an update of the publication United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights be prepared, a substantial project has been undertaken with the aim of completing an updated and restructured publication by the autumn of 1992. The new publication will more coherently reflect the priorities of the United Nations human rights programme and this publication is expected to be an important working tool in the preparatory process for the World Conference on Human Rights.

15. With respect to A Compilation of International Instruments and The Status of International Instruments, the General Assembly directed an update of these publications, in paragraph 4.V(e) of resolution 46/116, and an extension of their scope to include the texts of regional instruments on human rights. Consultations have been initiated with regional human rights organizations responsible for such instruments, with the aim of compiling a full inventory of instruments for inclusion as part of the updated publications. The target date for publication is expected to be towards the end of 1992.